

ORIGINAL

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

BY HAND DELIVERY

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The Portals
445 12th Street, S.W.
Room TW-3-C217
Washington, D.C. 20554

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Re: Written Ex Parte Presentation

**Cellular Service and Other Commercial Mobile Radio Services in the Gulf
of Mexico, WT Docket No. 97-112**

**Amendment of Part 22 of the Commission's Rules to Provide for Filing and
Processing of Applications for Unserved Areas in the Cellular Service and
to Modify Other Cellular Rules, CC Docket No. 90-6**

Dear Mr. Furth:

On behalf of MobileTel, Inc. ("MobileTel"), this letter responds to PetroCom's May 16, 2001 *ex parte* letter (the "May letter") alleging that MobileTel has failed to demonstrate any difficulty serving customers along the coast under the Commission's current rules. PetroCom's assertions do not bear scrutiny. As demonstrated below, the current rules, by prohibiting any extensions by land-based carriers into the CGSA of the Gulf of Mexico Service Area ("GMSA") licensees, prevent MobileTel from providing an acceptable grade of service in the bayous and along the coastline.

As the attached coverage map illustrates, the Louisiana coastline, including that along the Houma-Thibodaux MSA, is unique because the land area immediately adjacent to the GMSA is a bayou that primarily consists of water and marshes.^{1/} While there are few, if any, subscribers

^{1/} A map of the Houma-Thibodaux MSA illustrating the 32 dBu contours of MobileTel's sites bordering the GMSA is included as Attachment A; see also Comments of MobileTel, Inc., WT Docket 97-112, CC Docket 90-6, p.5 (July 2, 1997) (noting the unique nature of the Louisiana coast).

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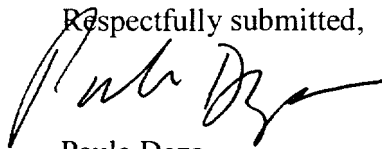
residing in this area, it is heavily transited by MobileTel subscribers who work in inshore oil fields or are engaged in boating or recreational or commercial fishing. Because this area is isolated and not heavily populated, if at all, reliable communications are essential. Given the current 32 dBu power limitation at the border, however, there are coastal areas, especially along the south and southwest borders of the Houma-Thibodaux MSA, that are not within the service contour of a MobileTel site. As a MobileTel customer travels through the pockets not within the reach of MobileTel's sites, he or she may lose service entirely or be forced to roam on the cellular systems of the Gulf-based carriers and incur exorbitant roaming rates.

The ALLTEL proposal, as modified, would better permit land-based carriers like MobileTel to provide service along the shoreline by enabling them to extend service contours into a modest coastal zone that extends into the Gulf. The Gulf carriers would likewise be able to extend contours into the coastal zone. Under this regime, MobileTel's customers would have better access to reliable and ubiquitous service without excessive roaming charges.

Contrary to PetroCom's assertion, this is not a proposal for FCC rate regulation of the Gulf carriers' roaming charges. PetroCom could continue to impose whatever roaming charges it wished. MobileTel seeks only a rule that will enable it to serve all of its subscribers effectively and efficiently. MobileTel respectfully suggests that if the Commission considers the effect of its current rules on MobileTel's customers and the customers of other land-based carriers, it will conclude that the ALLTEL proposal, as modified, best serves the public interest.

Pursuant to section 1.1206(b)(1) of the Commission's rules, four copies of this letter are being filed with the Office of the Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment

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Attachment

